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224 scratched their bodies all over so that the loss of blood would lighten them and they would be able to run long distances without becoming weary. Regarding the Indian runners in his time Adair says:

"Though some of us have often ran the swiftest of them out of sight, when on the chase in a collective body, for about the distance of twelve miles; yet, afterward, without any seeming toil, they would stretch on, leave us out of sight, and out-wind any horse." He reinforces this statement by telling how the Choctaw chief Red Shoes had run down and killed a French trader mounted on a fast horse.[81]

MEANS OF COMMUNICATION

202 The languages of the southern Indians are matters for separate discussion, and, as our classification is based on language, that in itself will indicate the number of dialects so far as they are known. Some other means of communicating intelligence were also in existence. I shall speak presently of mnemonic devices such as notches, knots, beads, and pictures.[81a] Smoke signals were also in use. In the Elvas account of the De Soto expedition we read that "so soon as the Christians appeared in sight of land [near Tampa Bay, Florida], they were descried, and all along the coast many smokes were seen to rise, which the Indians make to warn one another."[82] And I was told myself that when the Seminole in Oklahoma went out hunting they divided into parties which preserved the proper distance from one another by smoke signals. They would light a fire, and, as the film of smoke rose they would stop it at intervals by throwing a blanket over it. Whooping also formed a kind of means of communication. The death whoop and the whoop of the successful warrior coming in with a scalp were well known. Adair also speaks of "the whoop of friendship," "the whoop of defiance," and the "news whoop."[83] Most interesting of all was a sign language. The existence of such a language among the Plains Indians is well recognized and by them it was carried to a high point of development. It is not so well known that there was such a language among the southern Indians, but the existence at least of a rough and ready device of the kind seems to be proven by Adair, who says:

201 "The present American Aborigines seem to be as skilful Pantomimi, as ever were those of ancient Greece or Rome, or the modern Turkish mutes, who describe the meanest things spoken, by gesture, action, and the passions of the face. Two far-distant Indian nations, who understand not a word of each other's language, will intelligibly converse together, and contract engagements, without an interpreter, in such a surprising manner, as is scarcely credible."[84]

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[81] Adair, Hist. Am. Inds., p. 393.
[81a] See pp. 429–436.
[82] Bourne, Narr. of De Soto, vol. 1, p. 32.
[83] Adair, Hist. Am. Inds., pp. 168, 169, 394, 373, 376, 377, 391, 418, 423, 429.
[84] Ibid., p. 79.